

TESTIMONY OF THE
CONNECTICUT COALITION
FOR **JUSTICE**
IN EDUCATION FUNDING
TO THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 23, 2009

The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding appreciates this opportunity to submit comments pertaining to **HB 6688 — An Act Concerning Education Grants**.

Most importantly, HB 6688 repeals the magnet school reduction from the definition of total need students in the ECS formula. This action will benefit every municipality/school district that has students who attend an interdistrict magnet school.

HB 6688 also increases the percentage of state funding of RESC-operated magnet schools from 55 percent to 60 percent, and creates a three-tiered grant program for districts receiving students under the Open Choice Program.

☐ Recognizing that the General Assembly is now faced with exceedingly difficult choices in devising a suitable biennium budget, CCJEF supports HB 6688 as an important — albeit modest — step in the right direction.

Nevertheless, much more remains to be done to ensure adequate funding for all of Connecticut's public schools, including interdistrict magnet schools operated by host districts as well as RESCs. Ensuring all students equal and meaningful educational opportunity in a state with the nation's worst achievement gap will not come without substantially greater investment. There is no better economic stimulus, short- or long-term, than investing in public education.

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The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF) is a broad-based coalition of municipalities, local boards of education, statewide professional education associations, unions, and other pro-education advocacy organizations, parents and Connecticut schoolchildren aged 18 or older, and other taxpayers. Member school communities serve more than 250,000 students, including approximately three-fourths of Connecticut's minority students, those from low-income homes, and students from homes where English is not the primary language.